

BLACKFRIARS

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EDITORIAL

RED TERROR is at its diabolical work in Spain, and there is no good reason to be confident that it will not break the boundaries of that tragic country. Whether the so-called Government supporters be Communists or Syndicalists or Anarchists matters very little; this is no political issue, no mere fighting against a local insurrection, no mere civil war. The issue is between Christ and antichrist, and the forces of the Evil One are venting their insane rage upon the ministers and servants of God. To call them "Government troops" and "rebels" respectively may seem to preserve the legal niceties and provide an excuse for turning a blind eye to the true facts; but the true facts are these, that priests, monks, and nuns, whose only crime is their sacred calling and Christlike lives, are being tortured and slain and torn in pieces with every conceivable expression of bestial brutality, that the sacred vessels, vestments and emblems of God's service are being profaned and ruthlessly burnt to the ground. Perhaps it cannot be proved that this orgy was engineered by Moscow, but it bears the unmistakable mark of the cloven hoof; and the assault upon Christianity is not going to end with Spain. That is the point which should

concern us, for we can do little or nothing to help our fellow Catholics there except pray for them. That fanatical mob could not have been roused to such insensate fury by Moscow or its partizans unless the religious sense of the people had been consistently undermined by an atmosphere of materialism, and the rights and just claims of the working classes disregarded. And it does not change the case that the victims of their blood-lust and vicious cruelty are innocent of its cause. Such a beast once roused in a man will hate most what is innocent and gentle and good. It is easy, but tragically foolish, to sit back with the comfortable feeling that such atrocities could not happen in our own country; but given the conditions (and who shall say that the conditions are not given?) and the opportunity, Jekyll would give way to Hyde here too. We shall not escape it unless the people at large can be brought to see that happiness and the panacea of all their social ills are not to be found in the false utopia for which Moscow stands but only in the City of God for which Rome stands. Meanwhile it serves us ill to fiddle while Rome is burning.

A notable step in the right direction has been taken by the Belgian hierarchy in summoning their people and inviting the faithful of other countries to a great Catholic Congress at Malines for the express purpose of expounding the practical value of the Church's teaching in view of the present urgent needs. Modern life will be discussed in all its aspects, but with some stress upon social and religious needs, and we have good reason to hope for important practical results. It has been maintained, not without some show of reason, that Belgium will again be the battleground of Europe—not, we profoundly hope, in the sense of 1914-1918, though the danger of that is perhaps more imminent than many of us like to suppose, but rather in the apocalyptic sense of the great battle that was fought between the hosts of Michael and Lucifer. It is a country of sterling Catholicity, and national differences will not prevent its people from standing shoulder to shoulder under the banner of Christ at the call of the Bishops. The corporate movement will be one of defence and attack—defence of the Christian principles of rational living as expounded not only in the Dogma and Morals but also in the social teaching of the Church; attack upon the anti-God menace of Communism that is drawing the Christian peoples

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blindly to their destruction. This Congress of Malines, an anticipatory account of which appears in our present issue, offers a magnificent example to the Catholics of other countries. It may well provide that effective nucleus of a Catholic Action which has hitherto remained little more than a name and an ideal. We join with the author of our article in a sincere hope that the English-speaking Catholics will rally to the support of this important, and maybe epoch-making, expression of Catholic truth.

EDITOR.